

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

**INDICTMENT FOR
MAIL FRAUD**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	*	CRIMINAL NO.
v.	*	SECTION:
TYRA CYPRIAN	*	VIOLATION: 18 U.S.C. §1341
	*	*
	*	*

The Grand Jury charges that:

COUNT 1
**MAIL FRAUD SCHEME TO
DEFRAUD THE AMERICAN RED CROSS**

A. AT ALL TIMES MATERIAL HEREIN:

1. On or about August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck southeastern Louisiana and shortly thereafter a major disaster was declared. Similarly, a major disaster was declared in Louisiana as a result of Hurricane Rita, which made landfall on September 24, 2005. In response to these hurricanes and the damage inflicted upon the Southeastern Louisiana area, the American Red Cross ("Red Cross") established assistance centers throughout the region in the late summer and early fall

of 2005.

2. At these assistance centers, people affected by the storms were able to apply for a one-time only financial grant of up to \$1,565 from the Red Cross. In order to receive these funds, applicants needed to present identification to a Red Cross representative that indicated residence in an affected zone. Applicants were also asked if they had previously received financial assistance from the Red Cross and were required to attest and sign a statement that certified that the applicant had not received any other financial assistance from the Red Cross from any other assistance center.

3. Once approved, the Red Cross made these disaster assistance funds available in one of four ways: (1) A personal check made payable to the applicant, issued on-site, and cashed with the assistance of the Red Cross; (2) A Red Cross-issued "Discover" card, issued on-site, and activated via phone by the applicant; (3) A Red Cross-issued Client Assistance Card, which the Red Cross purchased from national banks and which operated in a manner consistent with debit/credit/ATM cards, issued on-site; (4) A personal check authorized by the Red Cross and mailed through the United States Postal Service to an address provided by the applicant.

4. Paychex, Inc., a Rochester, NY-based company that had volunteered its services to the Red Cross, processed personal checks to applicants as deemed appropriate and authorized by the Red Cross. These checks were processed and issued to applicants via the United States Postal Service.

5. The defendant, **TYRA CYPRIAN**, presented herself to Red Cross assistance centers on thirteen (13) occasions between on or about September 23, 2005 and on or about October 25, 2005. On each visit, she applied for financial assistance and falsely and fraudulently stated that she had not received any other financial assistance from the Red Cross. As a result of her actions on these 13 applications, **TYRA CYPRIAN**, received direct financial assistance from the Red Cross in one of

the four manners described above, totaling \$14,085.00, of which \$12,520.00 was fraudulently obtained.

B. THE SCHEME TO DEFRAUD:

From on or about September 23, 2005 to on or about October 25, 2005 in the Eastern District of Louisiana and elsewhere, the defendant, **TYRA CYPRIAN**, did knowingly and willfully devise and intend to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain money and property from the Red Cross, by means of false representations, pretenses, and promises, by falsely and fraudulently obtaining financial assistance from the Red Cross, beyond that to which she was entitled.

It was part of the scheme and artifice to defraud that the defendant, **TYRA CYPRIAN**, stated on October 25, 2005 that she had not received any other Hurricane Katrina or Rita financial assistance from the Red Cross at any other assistance center, when in truth and in fact she had received such assistance on prior occasions.

C. THE MAILING:

On or about October 25, 2005 in the Eastern District of Louisiana, the defendant, **TYRA CYPRIAN**, for the purpose of executing the scheme and artifice to defraud, as alleged in Paragraph B above, did knowingly cause to be delivered to her address of 19192 Ceazar Lane, Apt. A, Hammond, Louisiana, through the United States Mail, a personal check authorized by the Red Cross


and issued by Paychex, Inc. on or about November 7, 2005, numbered 1037000524, in the amount of \$1,565.00; all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341.

A TRUE BILL:

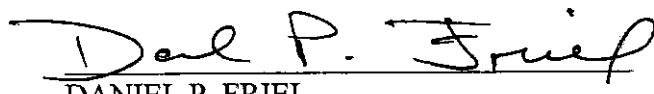
FOREPERSON



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New Orleans, Louisiana
May 7, 2009